

PARALLEL LEARNING TRUST

Seasonal newsletter of Trust wide updates!

Contents

CEO Welcome Page 2

Central Trust Updates Page 3

Kennington Park
Academy Updates Page 4

Update from Martyn
O'Donnell Page 5

Park Campus Academy
Updates Page 6

Inspire Academy
Updates Page 7

Wandle Valley
Academy Updates Page 8

Update from Stacia
Petterson Page 9

Ramsden Hall
Academy Updates Page 10

Sutton House
Academy Updates Page 11

Victory Park Academy
Updates Page 12



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CEO Welcome

Welcome to PLT's first ever Newsletter! These Newsletters will celebrate some of the fabulous successes of staff and pupils as well as share some of the exciting developments across the Trust. One of the key aims of this academic year is to embed the key systems that underpin how we work in Teaching & Learning, Progress, Behaviour and Personal Development across all academies through Trust wide Steering groups. There is also a desire to increase the opportunities for staff and pupils to experience what other PLT academies have to offer. The Leadership teams of each academy and myself would be very keen to hear from anyone who has ideas for staff and pupils could work together in formal learning, the arts of competition.

Building work has commenced at Ramsden Hall Academy to provide a brand new residential block which will transform the residential provision, providing an increased capacity of 40 beds. The new facilities will enable us to help to develop the pupils independent living skills. As part of the build project we will be losing the heritage building.

Although this is staying as part of the Trust, the academy will not be able to use it therefore any rooms and spaces that are used by the education part of the academy will be re-provided in the new educational buildings, linked to the current education block therefore the following will also be provided: 7 new classrooms, 7 new withdrawal rooms, 1 new learning resource centre, 1 new main assembly hall, 1 new dining hall, 1 new conference room and 4 new SEN therapy rooms. Details of the plan can be found here <http://www.ramsdenhall.org.uk/build-project-2019/>

PLT is also continuing to work with the DfE to improve the facilities of Inspire Academy and over the summer a new Vocational Block of 3 units was built to immediately enhance the facilities. The DfE and Regional School's Commissioner has approved a significant change bid to increase the size of Inspire as well as catering for a wider range of special educational needs. Currently work is underway on refining the design brief on a new build solution on a local site to expedite the final solution.

Finally, the Trust is focusing on improving and investing in governance, staff, pupils, parents and carers through a range of training courses which are completely free through developing a partnership with Anspear publishing. Further information on these new learning opportunities will be shared with you shortly and all that remains is for me to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and the very best wishes for the New Year.



MARK JORDAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OFFICER

'Education is
not the
filling of a
pail, but the
lighting of a
fire.'

W.B. Yeats

Central Trust Updates

Damian Valle Valenzuela - Head of IT



As always the IT team have been busy this term, below is a summary of some of our more recent projects: Recent restructure of department and the arrival of Jordan our new IT apprentice for the London Hub. Following flooding and risk to equipment, we relocated the server room and all equipment at Inspire Academy to the new vocational block at very short notice and with a quick turnaround. We are currently working on vastly improving the network and performance at Wandle. Over the half term we will be installing a new server, building and deploying a new image and re-imaging all PC's.

Corinne Gould - Personal Assistant to CEO & GDPR Lead Officer



This term I have been working on scheduling all one to one meetings for the academic year for everyone the CEO line manages to ensure that the CEO and staff are clear of the targets they have to meet throughout the academic year. This term I have continued to support the CEO to ensure his time is used in the most efficient way. As I am also the GDPR lead officer for the Trust, I have been ensuring that all DPO assistants in each academy are up to date on current legislation by having regular GDPR meetings. I have created multiple templates to be used across the Trust to ensure we are GDPR compliant in every area.

Englantín Muca - Deputy Head & Teaching and Learning Lead for Victory Park Academy



This term I have been working on providing strategic leadership across the Trust for Teaching, Learning & Progress, including sharing of best practice, quality assurance and developing evidence based systems that result in improved performance. I have been leading on the Trust's Progress strategy including influence software systems utilised such as Triangulation Table. I have been the Trust wide lead on Assessment for Learning ensuring that academies have access to appropriate support and resources. For example across Trust we have implemented a Flight path, with clear level descriptors to measure academic progress.

Maldwyn Fjord Roberts - Executive Lead: Behaviour, Safeguarding, Personal Development and Wellbeing



My focus for the Autumn Term has been to increase Sleuth capability across the Trust. Sleuth is the software tool used within PLT, for tracking pupil behaviour and personal development. We have completed a successful Trust wide Inset training day, held the central team office, for all Behaviour Leads and staff identified as being key in supporting our desire to raise standards across the PLT academies. The first stage of our strategy of succession management and implementing minimum standards for behaviour tracking is in place. Thank you to all academies for actively participating, with such enthusiasm, and Tom Vodden's from the School software company for the informative and engaging workshop.

Mollie Warne - Marketing Development Officer



I have been working on a number of projects over this term. Some of the key areas I have been working on have been developing a Trust wide approach to staff handbooks, creating a strong social footprint across the whole Trust through the use of Twitter, developing the pages on the website to make it more informative and creative and implementing branding/signage across the Trust to ensure more brand awareness and to make it more consistent across the Trust. I have been working on website compliance across the Trust since May 2019, when I came into post as Marketing Development Officer, and I have seen some outstanding hard work and improvement on website compliance throughout the Trust in the Autumn term!

LONDON COMES TO KPA – “when a man is tired of London, he is tired of life” - Samuel Johnson 1777

This term our main topic has been ‘LONDON’. This has allowed us to focus particularly upon History and Geography as well as upon other subjects. It has also allowed us to take the children out on educational visits. So far we have taken pupils to the SkyGarden and also for a walk along the River Thames.

Examples of some of the work on display in classes:

The London Eye – we have recreated this using photographs of pupils and staff inside the pods.

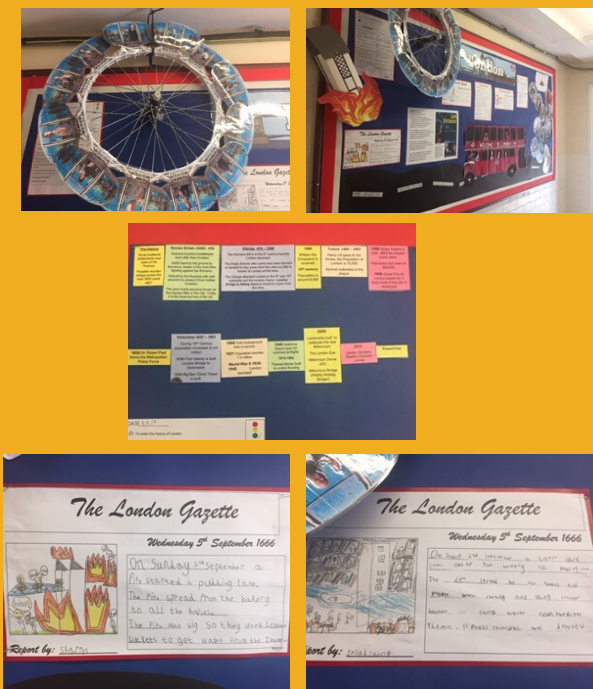
A timeline of London starts in a period of history when small, scattered settlements were near the bank of the river Thames. It is thought there was a wooden bridge spanning the Thames 3,000 years ago.

Newspaper reports of the Great Fire of London –our KS1 class have enjoyed this subject.

Kennington Park Academy is based in North Lambeth. We have 3 x provisions that we are responsible for:

- 1. Kennington Park Academy – a 50 x place primary Alternative Provision which caters for pupils aged Y1-Y6. Our pupils are referred via Lambeth LA or by Lambeth primary schools who require intervention placements.
- 2. Oak Park – a small SEMH provision of 2 x classes which is based in the KPA building. Lambeth SEN refer pupils with EHCPs aged between Y1-Y6. These pupils will stay with us until the end of Y6.
- 3. Rockbourne Park- Lewisham LA have commissioned us to open and run their primary Alternative Provision. This is off-site and based in Lewisham . The capacity for this provision is 25 x pupils aged between Y1-Y6 and referrals are via the Lewisham Fair Access Panel which meets regularly across the academic year. The pupils all consider themselves to be part of our family and recognise that they are linked together like ‘cousins’.

The staff all work well as a team –regardless of which ‘area’ they are working within and we pride ourselves upon our collaborative work and sharing of ideas and best practice.



Update from Martyn O'Donnell - Executive Headteacher for Park Campus Academy, Inspire Academy and Wandle Valley Academy

The life of an Executive Head.

Since starting the role it's been a learning curve for me and the Academy leaders. There has been a need to prioritise each of the Academies skill sets. From the analysis of what is going well and what isn't and where support for the 'what isn't' can be provided from within or from without of the Trust can then be deployed is gradually taking place.

The Trust is developing new concepts or minimum service standards and implementing these is something that I'm involved with and hold Academies to account.

Over the next term one of my intentions is that we start to develop our recruitment processes across the Hub/Trust. I am conscious of the fact that we are specialist educational providers but teachers don't have this type of specialist training during teacher training. I am also conscious that agencies charge finder fees, so my feeling is to go out and be pro-active in finding the quality of staff needed to deliver the highest standards that our students and parents expect from a PLT academy.

What has amazed me about the role is how the diversity and uniqueness of the individual Academies shines. Each one of the London and Kent academies are different, they all have their own identity, very different staff teams, different ideas and due to this have very different views, which is healthy as new ideas are always forthcoming.

Communication and sharing of good practice has also started to cascade across the Academies. Visits to other schools, steering group meetings and numerous links have been made over the past half term.

Although I'm not a political person I'm gradually making inroads into each of the Local Authorities and always looking to promote the Academies or raise issues with the relevant bodies that will benefit each Academy. From this perspective, it's interesting to see how different each authority works and thinks quite differently.

One of our major successes this term is the news that Park Campus has been nominated as one of three schools in Lambeth to be part of a successful bid through the Home Office's Youth Endowment Fund. The Youth Endowment Fund has made its first round of grants totalling £16.2m to 22 projects that aim to prevent youth offending through early intervention.

This will see the 'Becoming A Man' project from Chicago being implemented into the Academy. This project has proven to be a success in Chicago and now Boston, it has been endorsed by President Obama and Bill Gates.

Park Campus Academy Updates

Projects Park Campus Academy is working on

Becoming a Man.

Park Campus Academy is one of three educational institutions working with the Mental Health Foundation. We have been lucky enough to secure funding from The Youth Endowment Fund in its first round of grants totalling £16.2m, to work on a project called Becoming a Man (BAM).

This project has already been delivered successfully in Chicago, USA. Use this link <https://urbanlabs.uchicago.edu/projects/becoming-a-man> to find out more.

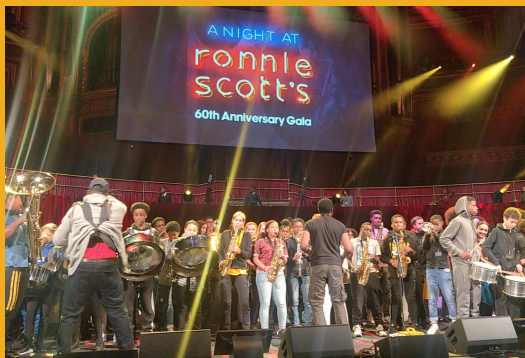


The project is strongly evidence-based and will work with young men at risk of getting involved with violent crime to help them make positive choices through targeted counselling and mentoring. Young men involved in the project will be more likely to avoid crime and violence and have improved mental health and wellbeing. BAM has been designed and delivered by the American organisation Youth Guidance, the partner on this project. They will be supporting, training and advising our staff for the project duration to allow us to replicate their successful outcomes. Project delivery is to begin January 2020 and to end by December 2022



Achievements

One of our Year 10 boxers, Malachi McLean, has been selected to represent PCA and the Met Police in a boxing tournament for novices at the Le Meridien Hotel, Piccadilly, London on 12th December 2019. The Met Police team will be boxing against the First Fusiliers regiment. Staff and students will be there on the night to support him.



On Wednesday 30th October, Kinetika Bloco (our music partners) are playing a gig at the Royal Albert Hall in London, for the Ronnie Scott's 60 year Anniversary show. Shemar Williams (playing clarinet) and Tyrese Levene (playing Bloco drums) have both been invited to join Kinetika to play this fantastic gig. (Photos & footage will be available after the event)

Inspire Academy Updates

English

Pupils in English are continuing to reflect upon, and develop their work in DIRT time. The pupils read the teacher feedback then in green pen make their improvements.

Well done to the pupils working hard to develop their work.



Teagate continued in KS4 English, as pupils used an article about Mr Nolan's tea ban to identify layout and language features in preparation for Functional Skills.



In Year 7 English, pupils have been using Comic Books to identify language techniques.

They have then applied these skills in their own mini Comics!



Cooking

This week saw pupils from year 9 (Chaucer) perfecting their Italian cooking skills by preparing a traditional Ragu sauce and pasta, just like Mama used to make!



GO 4 Schools

GO 4 Schools is the new data and assessment tracking tool being used across the Parallel Learning Trust and specifically here at Inspire Academy. This amazing new web based software allows teachers to track the progress of their pupils, collate and analyse data and share information on how pupils progress with parents and beyond. The Go 4 Schools website has the following description about their software: GO 4 Schools is a powerful, joined-up, online system that supports whole-school improvement in a way no other system does. We make it easy to capture, analyse and share classroom data in real time, allowing your staff, students and parents to make better decisions - daily. It's the efficient, smart and agile way to work with school data. Mr. Searle has worked closely with teachers to ensure that benchmark and term 1 grades are in place on newly created markbooks and this information has already been shared at a year 7 target setting meeting. In terms 2 and 6 there will be official written reports created by all teachers using GO 4 Schools and these will be shared with all parent(s)/carer(s) of our pupils. We had a target sharing meeting with the parents of our new year 7's this week. This was to show the parents how we use the targets from their EHCP's in class each day to ensure the best progress for the pupils. This was a great success but we have thought of how we could improve this even more for next time! We'd love your feedback.

Mrs Wood Assistant Head/SENCO

Wandle Valley Academy Updates

Careers

Well done to all of the pupils who participated in the Wandle Valley Careers Fair on Friday 11th October. The feedback from the employers and training providers has been nothing but positive, praising the pupils' manners and maturity.



The Garden Area

We have been renovating the little garden area in the primary department. We are hoping that it will look great for when the weather gets better and we can start using this space more. We want to plant some things in 'The Patch' soon too!



Volcanos in Topic

Group S firing their volcanoes in topic, a little underwhelming; no hot lava but we still had fun.



Independent Travel Training

Pupils in Year 6 and 7 participated in Independent Travel Training (provided by TfL) in Sutton, on Thursday 10th October. The morning included road safety practice, interactive role-plays and practical tips for safe travel on London buses.



Red Class Eggs-periments!

We started our Survival topic with the Survival Eggs-periment. We used different materials to try to protect an egg from a fall. We have also looked at natural disasters and created our own volcanoes and earthquake proof shelters. We erupted our volcanoes using coke and Mentos and tested our shelters using jelly to represent the earthquake and aftershocks!

Update from Stacia Pettersen - Executive Headteacher for Ramsden Hall Academy, Sutton House Academy and Victory Park Academy

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new Executive Headteacher for Essex and Southend. I am delighted to be part of the Parallel Learning Trust and to be supporting the Essex and Southend academies in their journeys towards becoming outstanding provisions.

My role as Executive Headteacher is to support, coach and challenge (where appropriate) each academy within my area; to deliver high quality education and secure the best outcomes for the pupils through providing a purposeful and safe environment with highly skilled and supportive staff.

A little bit about me.....I have extensive experience across the entire spectrum of special educational needs, having worked as an educator across a number of different settings; both within mainstream education and special schools including residential provision. I have exemplar classroom practice alongside significant leadership/management experience including previously working as a Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Head of Service for a Local Authority. I am highly skilled within Safeguarding and I have notable experience of multi-disciplinary working to promote positive outcomes for children and their families. I am a trained Designated Safeguarding Lead; and I have previously led and supervised Safeguarding practice across organisations, services and schools. I have substantial experience of managing large scale budgets up to 4 million pounds and taking a service out of extensive deficit in to profit.

I champion therapeutic approaches and strategies for children with additional needs, I have previously set up a lot of service level agreements for therapies/therapists. I have also line managed health professionals, social workers, police officers as part of multi-agency working practice. I have sustained experience in developing sensory spaces and experiences for children including being trained within sensory integration, vestibular therapies and deep pressure massage. I am keen upon developing holistic experiences for pupils and I have previously had wide ranging experience of developing services for children with significant mental health difficulties.

At present, the Essex and Southend Academies have been working on their approaches to Self-Evaluation and have developed their documents on the Perspective system. The documents are dynamic to ensure that the data embedded is always relevant. Following on from this the schools continue to work on their improvements and will have a framework of further school development planning moving forward; they have all embraced the work around Ofsted preparation. All schools have individually and collectively accepted with open arms the support and challenge that has been provided, and as relationships and processes solidify the schools will be better placed to make rapid and consistent progress; to all be at different points a minimum of 'Good' judgement under the new Ofsted Framework. The Senior and middle leadership teams are currently being supported to effectively hold the rest of the teams accountable, this has resulted in additional responsibilities given to some staff members, coaching and mentoring being provided to others.

Ramsden Hall Academy Updates

Environment Day

Environment Day this year was a great success; the main focus was to create a safe path through the secure play area. Below is a picture of the students and path they made.



New Build

Works for our new build finally started on 14th October. To see plans of what our new build is going to look like please take a look at our website <http://ramsdenhall.org.uk/build-project-2019/>



Therapeutic Provision s in School

This term we are lucky enough to have Phoebe join us. Phoebe is an Art Therapist Student. She will be in on a Tuesday and Thursday and she will be meeting pupils in Cedar. She has lots of exciting ideas in store.



Gill and her therapy dog Donut still continue to come in every Thursday. Gill and Donut are on the playground area outside the Art Room. The students love Donut!



Sailing Trip

This term 8 of our students took part in a residential sailing trip with the Cirdan Sailing Trust. The students set sail from Ipswich Harbour and sailed around Essex for a week. They learnt so many new skills and they even got a chance to steer the boat on their journey. It looked like everyone had such a good time!



Rewards Trip Day

On Thursday 17th October, there were lots of trips that went out for students who had achieved high points and good behaviour throughout the half term. One trip was the students who helped make the path on Environment Day went TFI Fridays. Looks like they had an amazing time!



Sutton House Academy Updates

Spinning Tunes for Bronze Arts Award – a Novel way to Learn.

Sutton House Academy pupils have recently embarked on an exciting 10-week course aimed at achieving an Arts Bronze Award in Music (equivalent to a GCSE qualification). This novel programme involves pupils with sophisticated mixing and DJ-ing equipment to produce tracks and sounds, not only encompasses the established genres of music like hip-hop, R&B and Rap, but also the more urban and trendy House and Grime styles.



Our pupils have taken well to this programme of learning, as it allows them to engage in being creative and experimental, whilst enjoying themselves with music. The programme is supported by Julie who is herself a former British Champion DJ. Julie has over the years, supported many celebrities and music artistes in honing in on their DJ skills. Julie has the latest equipment and will teach our pupils how to use the technical aspects to consoles and mixers. Adding all of this to our pupils' 'MC-ing' skills, there will no doubt lead to an ear-popping result. The programme will culminate in Sutton House pupils producing a cd for themselves, containing recording of them 'spitting out them bars'.

For The Love of Science...

As part of working towards a fully operational Science curriculum at Sutton House Academy, we have partnered up with Southend School for Boys and have devised a series of 'Science Drop-Down Days' or STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) Days. The first of these was successfully held on Wednesday 16th October 2019. Through the course of day, pupils were involved in sessions where they linked to forces and gravity; bacteria and the human body; understanding solids, liquids and gases; and engineering. Our pupils worked in teams and on their own. The challenges saw pupils in the classes pit their skills against each other, together with class groups trying to out-do other groups. They found this very interesting as they were building tower structures with a standard set of resources. In most cases, their creative and ingenious plans came together, and proved to be successful. By messing around with their hands and slices of bread, they got to learn and understand how bacteria develops around some parts of our bodies, more than others. Getting our pupils to learn how bacteria seeks out key areas in the body to thrive in, was perhaps achieved when a pupil confidently blurted out: "Mould is not Gold". In the forces and gravity session, they focused on making paper-jets. After their initial flights, pupils worked out what modifications and adaptations were needed to improve the 'hang-time' for a longer glide. A few of our pupils exceeded 17 metres and one pupil had his paper-jet glide the full length of the school hall...that's no mean feat. Experimenting with solids, liquids and gases was always going to be a messy affair – and it was. However, this activity created the perfect avenue for learners to explore the changing nature of 'gloop'. Another Science Drop-Down day has been planned for Wednesday 13th November 2019. This time round, Sutton House pupils have the opportunity of working in the Science Department at Southend School for Boys for the greater part of a day. There is no doubt that our pupils will find the next STEM Day to be as enjoyable as the first.

Victory Park Academy Updates

Update from the Head Teacher

Welcome to the autumn edition of Victory Park news. I just want to say a big thank you to all the staff and students for making our first half term a great success. Our pupils have led the way in expressing their views on enrichment and education. New opportunities include a variety of extra curriculum and enrichment opportunities like Music & Sport. We will be working hard through the second part of the autumn term to bring an even greater variety of opportunities.

Construction & Horticulture

This half term year 10 and 11 have been working on constructing an outdoor garden. They have been using basic carpentry skills to construct planters and have learnt how to use a variety of tools safely and effectively. They have also been learning about horticulture and how to sow plants and care for them. The pupils have worked well as a team, showing great engagement in the activities.



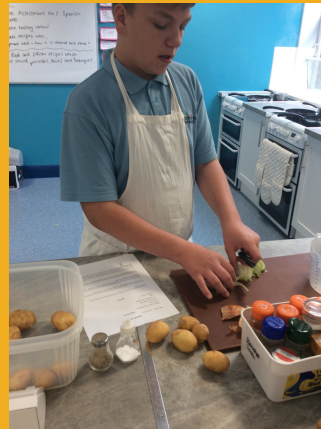
Fire safety officer Stuart came in to speak with the children about firework safety and how to be safe on Halloween. The children listened well and came up with some fantastic ideas on how to stay safe.

Sport Science

This term in Sport Science students have been learning about nutrition and the benefits of a balanced diets. Students have researched a range of different diets and compared the diets of Anthony Joshua and Mo Farah. The term ended with students setting diet targets and creating some fantastic diet plans.

In The Classrooms - Primary Turnaround Group

The children enjoyed listening to a story teller who came in to read we're going on a bear hunt, the children each had a cuddle with the bear and were able to have a go on the magical storytelling glockenspiel.



Food Technology

In Food Tech this half term we have been concentrating on demonstrating different cooking skills and health and safety in the kitchen. The year 10 and 11's have been following recipes with numerous instructions and most are able to do so independently now.

Bronze Award In Music

The 7 and 8 group have started the Bronze Arts Award in Music which involves writing and composing songs on some cutting edge Ipad apps in their chosen genre which is mostly Drill and Rap music. Well done guys keep up the good work.



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